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E.O. 12958: DECL: CLOSURE OF ICTY
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SUBJECT: ICTY ACTION PLAN UPDATE NUMBER 1: AUGUST 4, 2006

Classified By: Ambassador Michael Polt, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

This cable describes GoS ICTY Action Plan Implementation as of August 4, 2006.

¶1. (c) Emboffs met August 4 (at USG request) with Rasim Ljajic to try to jump-start the weekly updates the GoS had proposed as part of the implementation of the Action Plan (AP). Initial indications are not inspiring, as most of the effort has been on bureaucracy building. There have been a few initial actions that could argue for a more robust GoS effort to find and apprehend Mladic. Ultimately, though, the success or failure of the Action Plan will depend on Kostunica's willingness to back it publicly and consistently, and to prepare the Serbian public for a new policy that demystifies Mladic and calls for his arrest. End summary.

Housekeeping

¶2. (c) We agreed to meet every Friday at 1430, right after Ljajic's internal Action Team meetings finish (he said the action team is meeting every Tuesday and Friday). We asked him to make sure to also set aside time to meet with local ICTY reps and EU officials as well. He said he is already talking regularly with local ICTY chief Deyan Mihov, and said ICTY investigators are meeting "daily" with Vukcevic. We told him we will set up similar meetings between Vukcevic and RLA in the near future.

Actions

¶3. (c) Ljajic outlined "actions" the GoS is implementing so far. Mostly, these are attempts to put financial pressure on Darko Mladic by sitting on his business interests and "trying" to close them down. He also said the GoS is blocking attempts by two brothers-in-law of Mladic from purchasing/privatizing a furniture concern, "Sipad." He also said the GoS is planning to go after Karadzic's publisher, and had under surveillance Karadzic's daughter, who apparently plans to meet with the publisher.

¶4. (c) Some other planned actions show more promise: Ljajic said he will, in Thursday's government session, call on the government to remove from his position as deputy of the Coordinating Body for Southern Serbia General Krstic. Krstic made public statements in the past weeks that if he found Mladic, not only would he not turn him in, but he would harbor him. We told him that if Krstic is fired, senior

people in the GoS need to be very open and public about the reasons for his dismissal) in accordance with one of our 11 recommendations.

¶ 15. (c) Finally, Ljajic said the GoS plans to bring in Tomic and Krga for questioning in the near future. He cautioned, though, that we should not expect to get too much out of the interrogation.

Media Plan

¶ 16. (c) The GoS plans to publish the "most damaging" of the excerpts from testimony they have received so far from Mladic supporters picked up in recent days. Ljajic also asked us if we can provide any assistance) preferably in the form of a media advisor or PR advisor, to help him better prepare his media plan. He promised senior GoS leaders would make additional statements about the need to arrest Mladic, and noted the PM already made such a statement two weeks ago. We reminded him that this needs to be a sustained effort, led by the PM, not a one-off. Unfortunately, his ability to coerce the PM to take a more active roll is virtually nil.

Rumors

¶ 17. (c) There was a story in local press August 4 that a sitting minister in 2005 had provided Mladic with medication. Ljajic said the story was completely false, probably a garble of information they already have: one of Mladic's personal bodyguards, Miroslav Stanic, apparently gave the GoS substantial information on Mladic and his supporters, and especially information about Jovo Djogo. Stanic told GoS questioners (Ljajic says) that he heard Djogo in 2003 bragging that Aca Tomic was providing him political cover to support Mladic. He also overheard a conversation in which Djogo told someone that current DEFMIN Stankovic had helped Mladic acquire medications for a stroke and hypertension (blood thinners or similar). Ljajic and others questioned Stankovic about his involvement in 2003, and he has denied it. As an aside, apparently Mladic had 3 separate identities that he used to get treatment at the VMA through 1997 (Ljajic said all the doctors were questioned long ago).

Comment

¶ 18. (c) Ljajic is as willing as ever to share information with us regarding the GoS efforts to track down Mladic. These new operational details do show a greater degree of openness than in the past, though because of our long-standing good working relationship with the agencies in charge of the operational aspects, we have enjoyed access to similar operational details for some time. Unfortunately, we have so far seen no movement on the public relations side of the AP. While still in its early stages, the Action Plan is still long on plan and short on action.

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